CARTOON NETWORK'S 20TH BIRTHDAY

TV kids

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SPECIAL REPORT

Stuart Snyder

By Mansha Daswani

On October 1, 1992, at a time when the concept of niche channels was still in its infancy, Turner Broadcasting System took a gamble on the idea that viewers would want an all-animation channel. Armed with the Hanna-Barbera library, the company launched Cartoon Network in 2 million homes. Today, the kids' channel has become so much more than a platform for animated library product. Acquisitions, original live-action and acquired series and TV movies all have a place on the channel, which has 27 feeds in 178 countries, reaching more than 367 million homes in 26 languages. Stuart Snyder, the president and COO of the animation, young adults' and kids' media division at Turner, reflects on Cartoon Network's history, how it is maintaining its ratings leadership among the key boys' demographic, and what's in store for the future as it expands onto multiple platforms.

TV KIDS: How has Cartoon Network evolved over the last 20 years?

SNYDER: We started as a network that was at its core based on a library of great content, specifically the Hanna-Barbera library that our company purchased. We launched with 2 million subscribers and now, 20 years later, we've built on that foundation to reach over 300 million households worldwide. We've grown our original content. We have the best animation business. We also have a wonderful, broad slate of live-action and special-event content. The one thing that has been consistent is our brand focus and our content focus. It's all about surprising our audience with unique content, all with a little bit of mischief, all with the Cartoon Network fun aspect to it. We've been doing that for 20 years consistently.

TV KIDS: Why was the expansion into live action important, and how did you do it while remaining true to the Cartoon Network DNA?

SNYDER: We talk to our audience on a regular basis. A few years ago we did an extensive study and one of the things that our audience told us is that they wanted to see more of themselves on our air. We took that to heart. We've been successful with *Dude, What Would Happen*, *Destroy Build Destroy*, *Hole in the Wall*. Those are right in the voice of Cartoon Network: fun, light comedies, talking to that core boy audience while also inviting girls. We really hit our stride with our new show *Level Up*, which is currently number one in its time slot. Our next live-action show is Nick Cannon's *Incredible Crew*, a sketch comedy for kids. The other thing to point out is Cartoon Network's Hall of Game, the first of its kind kids' sports-awards show. We've had very good success two years running with that franchise.

TV KIDS: Your ratings with all of these shows would counter the perception that boys aren't watching TV!

SNYDER: I think they are watching TV! We are enjoying fantastic success with our new generation of comedies, such as *Adventure Time* and *Regular Show*. *MAD* is doing well. *Annoying Orange* is our newest show. *The Amazing World of Gumball*. Our show with LEGO, *Ninjago*, has just blown the roof off in regard to not only boys but kids [in general]. I was very pleased with the sneak preview of our upcoming show *DreamWorks Dragons: Riders of Berk*, which is through our partnership with DreamWorks Animation. You put all that together and I think boys are watching TV—they're watching Cartoon Network.

TV KIDS: How do you take preexisting brands like *Annoying Orange* and *How to Train Your Dragon* and turn them into Cartoon Network brands?

SNYDER: The great thing is we really don't have to do too much in terms of the core properties of these brands. *Annoying Orange* is already a phenomenal success on the Internet, it has already attracted a great audience. We've added characters, so there's a connective story instead of just short clips. *Dragons* is a very similar thing. *Dragons* has that great brand DNA. It was a successful movie and there were more stories to tell with those very engaging characters. We're building upon the success of these franchises.

TV KIDS: How are you attracting talent to Cartoon Network Studios and coming up with original ideas that will resonate with your viewers?

SNYDER: It starts with our DNA. We know who we are in terms of what kind of content we're looking for and who our brand is and why our audience watches Cartoon Network. We have been discovering and then nurturing great creative talent for 20 years, that's gone all the way back to Genndy Tartakovsky [*Dexter's Laboratory*] and Craig McCracken [*The Powerpuff Girls*]. Now we're working with Pen Ward with *Adventure Time*, J. G. Quintel with *Regular Show*. So it's really about finding great creative talent who have visions of who their characters are and what they want their shows to be, and giving them the canvas to create their shows. And then we put them through the Cartoon Network platforms, so that they can be discovered by a wide audience. One of our key jobs is to nurture that talent to make them as successful as they can be.

TV KIDS: Can you tell us about the various ways you've been harnessing web and mobile platforms to expand the reach of the brand?

SNYDER: It's our responsibility to have our shows on as many platforms as possible. It's really whenever and wherever [our audience] wants to watch shows or interact with the shows. Kids are watching television, kids are watching online, kids are watching on smartphones, they're watching on tablets. It's very important that kids are able to engage with our shows and our brands on a 360-degree, 24/7 basis. First of all, we put our episodes up [online]. We also took the step this summer to stream the network live to our viewers through our Cartoon Network Video app and also online. Not only can they watch the shows they want to watch, they can actually watch the network live. And now the most recent example is our new watch-and-play announcement with CN 2.0. That's where kids choose to either watch a show, or

The many faces of Ben: In both live-action and animated forms, *Ben 10* has been a megahit with Cartoon Network's target boy demo since its 2006 debut.

they can play a game, or on the iPad they can do both at the same time.

There's no doubt that the second screen, or what I call the simultaneous experience, is taking place. I see it with my own kids, watching television in our family room with their laptops in front of them. Either they're finding out more about the shows or they're playing a game or they're doing something [else]. Kids today are multitasking, they are enjoying experiencing their brands and shows in a whole different way than five or ten years ago. It's important for us as content creators and as Cartoon Network that they can interact with our brands and our shows whenever and wherever they want to, and that includes on a multiscreen basis. If they want to watch something and play a game with their favorite character, they should be able to do that if the technology serves them.

TV KIDS: Does Cartoon Network U.S. work with its sister channels around the world?
SNYDER: We collaborate greatly with the Cartoon Networks around the world. We operate from a global perspective and one of the core tenets is to build global franchises. *Ben 10* is our big worldwide success story. We're in the active [franchise] building phase right now for *Adventure Time* and *Gumball*. What's great about *Gumball* is that it was created out of our Cartoon Network Studios Europe.

TV KIDS: What are some of your key pro-social initiatives for 2013?
SNYDER: We will continue on with our Move It Movement, which is all about getting kids to get active and to eat right. Obviously, this is a very important topic for kids and families. We will also continue our efforts on our Stop Bullying: Speak Up campaign. We launched this campaign not only because kids told us this was an important issue for them, they told us that they could actually do something about it if we provided them with the tools on how to make an impact. We started that campaign here in the U.S. and we're expanding it on an international basis. It just recently launched in Latin America.

TV KIDS: What are your priorities for the coming year?
SNYDER: First and foremost our focus is about building on the momentum that we are enjoying right now. It's been five years since this team has been together, and, looking at what we've done with Cartoon Network, the audience has responded extremely well to our brand, to our shows. We have shows that are really breaking out and are becoming true global franchises. The whole focus for us is to continue to build great content for our audiences. If we do that right, then it's about serving our audience wherever and whenever they want our content, in whatever format. And the third element is to understand our audience to the best of our ability. The wonderful thing about the kids' business is that it does change—in terms of technology, in terms of platforms—but in a way it really doesn't. Kids are still kids. They want to be entertained, they want to laugh, they want to watch and engage with characters. If we start there, if we're doing that, then everything else can fall into place, as long as we continue to listen to them and give them great content on every platform that we can. ■

Powering up: Cartoon Network has been expanding into live-action content over the last few years with shows like *Level Up*.

20 Years Of CARTOON NETWORK™

1992
On October 1, Cartoon Network launches in 2 million households. **The Great Piggy Bank Robbery** is the first cartoon to air on the channel.

1993
In April, Cartoon Network launches in Latin America. Six months later, the brand expands to Europe.

1994
Cartoon Network premieres its first original, **Space Ghost Coast to Coast**, the first animated late-night talk show. In October, viewers in Asia get their first taste of Cartoon Network.

1995
Bolstering its commitment to original animation, Cartoon Network commissions 48 shorts for World Premiere Toons. Five original series come out of the initiative.

1996
Dexter's Laboratory premieres as Cartoon Network's first original half-hour series. By the end of the year, it is the channel's top-rated show.

1997
Off the back of the originals **Cow and Chicken** and **Johnny Bravo**, Cartoon Network increases its average prime-time ratings among kids 6 to 11 by 52 percent.

1998
The Powerpuff Girls makes its debut on the channel.

2000
Cartoon Network launches Boomerang, devoted exclusively to classic cartoons. Cartoon Network Studios opens in Burbank to develop and produce original animated series.

2001
The late-night block Adult Swim launches, targeting viewers 18 to 34. It becomes a full-fledged network in 2005.

2002
Cartoon Network's first theatrical production, **The Powerpuff Girls Movie**, premieres. Celebrating its tenth anniversary, Cartoon Network reaches near-full U.S. cable penetration.

2003
Cartoon Network introduces the Emmy-winning micro-series **Star Wars: Clone Wars**, consisting of 20 three-minute shorts produced in association with Lucasfilm.

2004
The channel ramps up its slate of originals, unveiling some 500 new half-hours at its Upfront and announcing a host of acquisitions.

2005
Pro-social initiatives launch, first with Get Animated, followed by Rescuing Recess, Move It Movement and Stop Bullying: Speak Up.

2006
Ben 10 premieres. The show will go on to become the channel's most successful global franchise. The channel produces its first live-action and animated hybrid movie, **Re-Animated**.

2007
Produced with Korea's Grigon Entertainment, the MMOG **Cartoon Network Universe: FusionFall** is previewed at Comic-Con ahead of its 2008 release. Based on the success of **Re-Animated**, the channel launches **Out of Jimmy's Head**. It later premieres its first original live-action movie, **Ben 10: Race Against Time**.

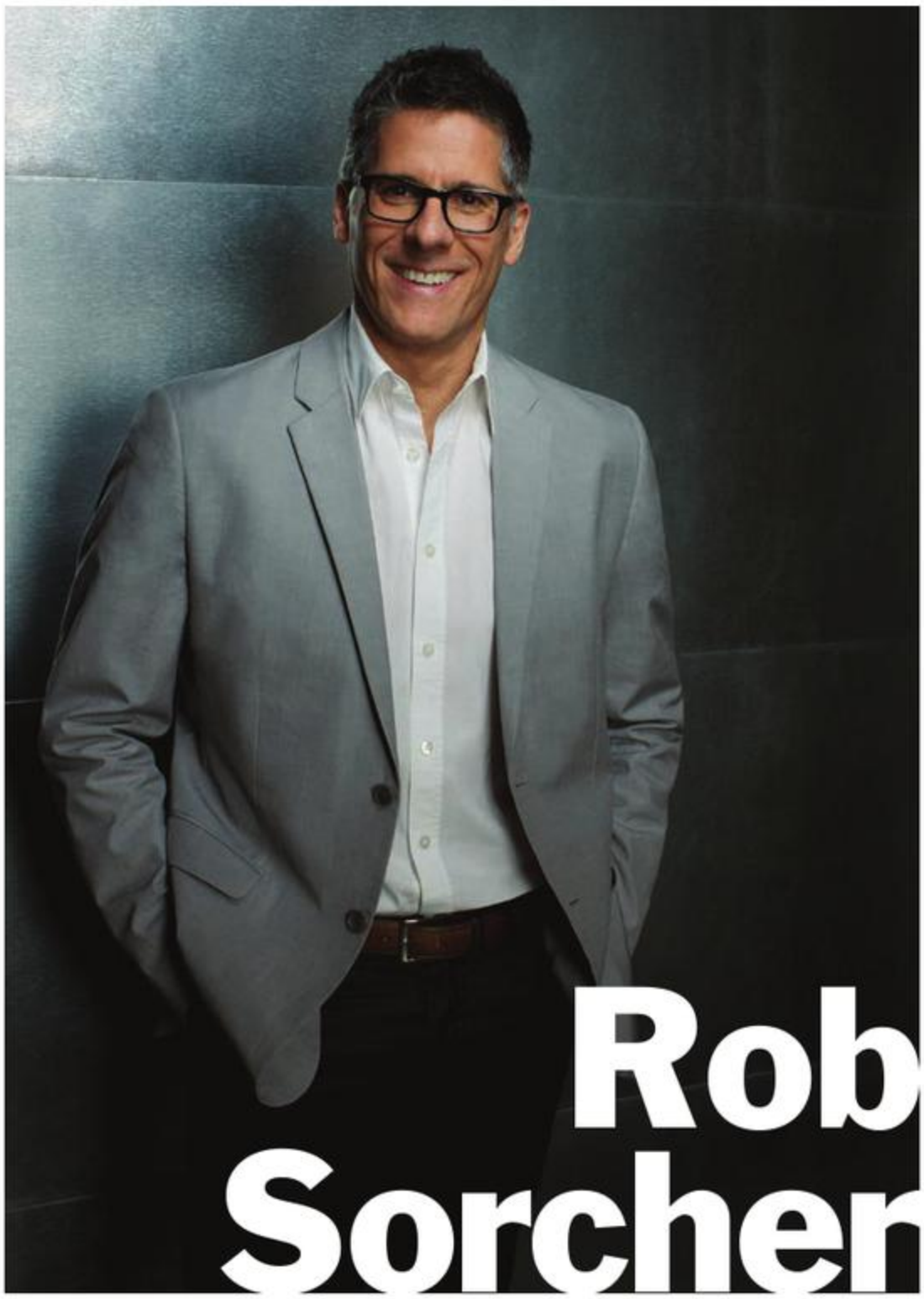
2008
Stuart Snyder is named president and COO of Turner Animation, Young Adults & Kids Media. The channel scores the rights to **Star Wars: The Clone Wars**. The **Ben 10** franchise continues with **Ben 10: Alien Force**.

2009
The channel commits to live-action entertainment, presenting such hit series as **Dude, What Would Happen** and **Destroy Build Destroy**. The live-action/CG-animated **Scooby-Doo!: The Mystery Begins** sets new ratings records for the channel.

2010
Adventure Time, **Regular Show** and **MAD** launch a new Monday night of animated comedies.

2011
The first-ever Hall of Game Awards deliver 5.6 million viewers over three weekend plays. The channel inks a deal with Joel Silver for a live-action theatrical feature for **Ben 10**. It then signs a development agreement for Angry Filmworks to develop a live-action motion picture based on **Captain Planet and the Planeteers**. **Level Up**, a live-action and CG-animated movie, premieres.

2012
Cartoon Network launches digital live streaming of its on-air content across multiple platforms, including online and on the iPod touch, iPhone and iPad. Cartoon Network and Adult Swim expand to Canada in partnership with TELETOON.



Rob Sorcher

By Mansha Daswani

In 2007, Stuart Snyder was assembling a new team to lead Cartoon Network into the future. To fill the post of chief content officer—responsible for original and acquired content as well as production at Cartoon Network Studios—Snyder turned to veteran cable programmer Rob Sorcher. The executive had worked at the channel earlier in his career before going on to FOX Family Channel, USA and then AMC. During Sorcher's tenure, Cartoon Network has premiered new hits like **Regular Show**, **Level Up** and **Adventure Time**; acquired third-party fare like **Ninjago** and the **Total Drama** franchise; and stepped up its collaborations with sister networks across the globe.

TV KIDS: What's been your overarching strategy since coming into the role?

SORCHER: My focus has been the reinvention of Carton Network Studios—putting together a set of shows and a development process that we can export around the world and that will take us into the future. Between our own home-grown hits (*Adventure Time*, *Regular Show*, *Ben 10*), these Warner Bros. Animation shows (*Looney Tunes*, *MAD*), key acquisitions and the new live-action stuff that's hitting with *Level Up*, we're firing on every cylinder now.

TV KIDS: Your latest hits *Adventure Time* and *Regular Show* both come from new, young animators. How did you go about finding new talent for Cartoon Network Studios?

SORCHER: We launched two kinds of shorts programs. [We created] an environment for creativity and for new ideas. [Animators] could work on [those concepts] without a lot of immediate judgment on whether these were going to be great shows or not. In doing that, we learned how to structure our studio and these shows around young animation creators who had really contemporary, fresh takes on their characters and storytelling. It's that process that ultimately led to *Adventure Time* and *Regular Show* and the ones that are about to follow. These were the first millennial-generation animators making cartoons for kids in their own generation.

TV KIDS: What's the process for turning a short into a full series?

SORCHER: The process is a painful one! [*Laughs*] *Adventure Time*, I wasn't even 100 percent sure it was going to make it to a series. We were committed to it; we had to redo and redo until we finally had it. *Regular Show* came out of the shorts program Cartoonstitute. You get seven minutes. Can you establish a world, a character's story, a sense of humor, in seven minutes? It's a very high bar.

Particularly with artists that are starting from a visual point of view, the process has to be worked out visually, and that takes time and it takes commitment. When you get to the end, you might find it's not right and you have to go back to the beginning again. It is not like working off a script. In both cases there were some dark hours. Should we keep going forward? Is this really working? All of that. We stayed with them and in the end that's what made the difference. Now we can look back and say, How could we have ever doubted it? [*Laughs*] We never doubted that the voice was there, that there was something so unique in each of those [shorts]. But the process of turning them into a series, that took a long time. We're much, much better at it now. It's still hard to find great talent and to really have all the factors that you need to have lined up, all working harmoniously.

TV KIDS: What are the specific challenges when developing live-action shows?

SORCHER: The process there is a little bit different. It is more of a traditional development process. In our case, it's been a matter of finding what formats are really going to work well housed inside all of our cartoons, and what's going to feel like our brand. You have other kids' channels out there making live action. In a lot of cases, the shows resemble each other. The thing that really powers our network is innovation. It's something that ideally you've not seen before. The tough part in live action is to design shows with that in mind. We've really tried to make shows that don't feel like they would be found anywhere else.

TV KIDS: How have you managed to keep *Ben 10* fresh?
SORCHER: We're up to nearly 200 episodes with that show. Ben keeps getting reinvented. There have been tonal shifts, there have been artistic shifts—new iterations of *Ben 10* are occurring each time. I would also credit all of our international networks and their passion and enthusiasm. This is a real priority for them, so they've actually helped to power this into a global franchise and to keep it fresh.

TV KIDS: How closely do you work with your counterparts in Europe, Asia and Latin America on developing new content?
SORCHER: We are a connected team. The proof of that is things like *Gumball*. The fact that a comedy cartoon can be developed in the U.K. and work brilliantly on U.S. air—that is the first time that has ever happened in this country in kids' TV. That's a credit to what they've built over there [in the London studios] and also it's a testament to collaboration. When it comes to this new wave of animation that's coming out of Cartoon Network Studios [the international programmers] are inside our development process. We're talking every week. ■

Global Franchises

The Amazing World of Gumball

Produced by Cartoon Network Studios Europe, this original comedy took the number one ranking among boys 2 to 11, 6 to 11 and 9 to 14 in its first season. Using 2D and 3D animation in a live-action setting, the show, now in its second season, follows 12-year-old Gumball and his family in the town of Elmore.

Adventure Time

Created by the young animator Pendleton Ward, the show has emerged as a huge hit since its April 2010 premiere. What started as a viral hit now leads its time period among kids 2 to 11, kids 6 to 11 and all major boy demos. It chronicles the adventures of Finn, a 12-year-old boy, and Jake, his best friend—a dog that can change shape at will. The madcap duo live in the Land of Ooo.

Regular Show

Another one of Cartoon Network's next-generation animated comedies, *Regular Show* is the creation of J.G. Quintel. It has notched up more than a million Facebook fans, while its app leads the iPhone kids' game charts. Incubated at Cartoon Network's Cartoonstitute, the show is heading into its fourth season, following best friends Mordecai, a blue jay, and Rigby, a raccoon, who are employed as groundskeepers at a park.

Ben 10

Created in 2006, *Ben 10* has been through numerous iterations on Cartoon Network and it remains the channel's biggest global franchise. The property includes four animated series, two live-action TV movies, one theatrical animated feature, and a live-action theatrical that is currently in development at Joel Silver's Silver Pictures. It has generated more than $3 billion in consumer-products revenues. There's also a live stage show in Asia, a roller coaster in the U.K. and more. This year sees the premiere of *Ben 10: Omniverse*.

THANKS TO ALL THE CHARACTERS THAT HAVE HELPED MAKE US WHAT WE ARE TODAY.

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